

Ginseng

A Valuable Forest Crop

Digging ginseng is as much a part of our American Heritage as hunting and fishing. The exporting of ginseng began in 1715 and peaked in 1858 when over 350,000 pounds were exported to China. Ginseng has been dug in West Virginia for over 100 years and is an important natural resource. In 1984, over 30,000 pounds of ginseng was sold to exporters for nearly \$4 1/4 million.

In West Virginia, the collecting or digging of ginseng, commonly referred to as "sang," begins August 15 and ends November 30. Diggers are required to plant the seeds from the plant they harvest at the digging site, thus perpetuating the plant. Digging roots when the seeds are green may have the adverse effect of destroying local populations.

Used as a tonic, tea and eaten straight, the roots of the ginseng plant are believed to be a health cure-all and do wonders for a man's virility. The root, which resembles the human body, is in great demand by Oriental Cultures and is believed to possess great power. The question of ginseng's power has been debated for years.

Because of a long history of exploitation in Eastern North America, the abundance of wild ginseng has diminished, which is

why the harvesting of ginseng is so closely monitored. The true value of West Virginia's ginseng was not realized until the early 1980's. At the present time, a ginseng buyer, referred to as a dealer, must be registered with the State. Dealers are required to keep a record of all ginseng purchased, including the date of purchase, name and address of the digger, amount purchased and the county in which the roots were dug. The dealer must then have the ginseng certified by the Forestry Division before it is shipped out of the State. This information will enable West Virginia to maintain this part of our American Heritage.

Additional information concerning ginseng may be obtained from the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Forestry Division's service forester for Pocahontas County, John Rossell, at Rt. 1, Box 142, Dunmore, WV 24934, telephone 799-6151.

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designated weighing stations throughout the state.

Those dealers who are located outside West Virginia, but are properly registered with the Division of Forestry to buy and sell ginseng, may buy from West Virginia diggers, but must have it weighed and certified BEFORE LEAVING THE STATE.

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Pioneer Days—July 9-11, '82

Ginseng

We had a request to print information about the ginseng laws and regulations.

Ginseng Law

S20-1-7 (31) The Director is hereby authorized and empowered to regulate and set the digging season of native, wild ginseng: Provided, that the digging season or wild, native ginseng be set between the first day of December and the fifteenth day of November of the following year.

Ginseng Rules

And Regulations

Section 1. Authority

1.01 By virtue of the authority granted the director of the Department of Natural Resources by Article 1, Section 7, Chapter 20 of the Code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, the following rules and regulations shall become effective August 1, 1978.

Section 2. Season

2.01 The collecting season for wild, native ginseng shall be from August 1 to November 15 of each calendar year.

2.02 The season shall be statewide and subject to change.

Section 3. Unlawful Acts

3.01. It shall be illegal to possess green ginseng between January 1 and July 31 of each calendar year.

Section 4. Collector's Responsibilities

4.01 Any person who collects wild, native ginseng upon the enclosed or posted lands of another per-

son shall obtain permission in writing from the owner, tenant or agent of such lands, and this person shall have in his possession such written permission when collecting ginseng upon said lands.

4.02 Any person who collects wild, native ginseng shall be required to plant the seeds from the plants he collects at the site of the digging.

Section 5. Dealer's Responsibilities

5.01. Any person, firm or corporation who buys wild, native ginseng shall obtain a Ginseng Dealer's Permit from the Department of Natural Resources.

5.02. Authorized ginseng dealers shall report annually to the Department of Natural Resources on a form prescribed by the said agency regarding the amount of wild, native ginseng bought and sold.

5.03. For each sale transacted, authorized gin-

seng dealers shall be responsible for attaching with the ginseng a West Virginia Ginseng Tag Number furnished by the Department of Natural Resources. This tag shall remain with the ginseng. See memo dated September 21, 1978)

Section 6. Revocation of Permit

6.01. Any dealer convicted of violating a provision of the Ginseng Rules and Regulations is subject to having his Ginseng Dealer's Permit revoked.

dealers registered with the State must submit their Export Certificate Report (ECR) forms to the Division of Forestry, 1800 Washington Street, East, Charleston, West Virginia 25305, prior to April 15, 1984.

Also, diggers are reminded that it is unlawful to ship or transport ginseng which has not been weighed and certified out of the state. It is the responsibility of the dealers to have the ginseng weighed and certified by Department of Natural Resources personnel at designated weigh stations throughout the state.

Those dealers who are located outside West Vir-

March 31 Is Deadline To Possess Non Weight Receipted or Uncertified Ginseng

Ginseng Coordinator Robert D Whipkey said the Division of Forestry is reminding both ginseng dealers and diggers that between April 1 and August 14 of each calendar year it is illegal to possess uncertified ginseng (green or dry) and/or ginseng that does not have a certified weight receipt attached.

Ginseng diggers should take their unsold ginseng to an official weigh station by March 31, 1995, to have it weighed. The Division of Forestry maintains weigh stations in 15 West Virginia counties. If diggers fail to have their ginseng weighed by March 31 or obtain a weight receipt, they will not be able to legally sell their ginseng and could risk being caught and fined.

For more information contact Robert D. Whipkey or Robin Black with the Division of Forestry at